Claims 1-53 are pending in this application.

The Examiner objected to claims 1, 20, 31, 33, 35, 48, 49 and 52 because they variously recited "intelligent agent", "inter-agent" and "intelligent negotiation agent" for both buyer and seller.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the terms are used consistently, both in the claims and in the written description. For example, when the term "intelligent agent" appears in the claims, it is modified by either "buyer" or "seller"; thus it is clear in all instances whether the "buyer's intelligent agent" or "seller's intelligent agent" is being referred to. The term is used in the claims to describe intelligent software agents that perform a negotiation function for either the buyer or seller, as indicated. Similarly, the term's "buyer's inter-agent" and "seller's inter-agent" are used to describe buyer or seller inter-agents that are software agents generated by other software agents in order to interface with each other. As these terms are used consistently and are intended to promote rather than detract from the clarity of the claims, the Examiner is asked to withdraw the objection.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 30, and 48-53 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Peckover. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 1 recites:

> 1. A system for exchanging information between a buyer and at least one of a plurality of sellers using computers that communicate over a distributed network, the system comprising:
>> a buyer's intelligent agent for receiving information regarding at least one selected item from at least one of a plurality of seller's inter-agents and for sending information regarding said selected item to said least one seller's inter-agents, said selected item being one of a group of individual product items and individual service items,
>> at least one buyer's input device in communication with said buyer's inter-agent, said buyer's input device for identifying a list of at least two sellers of said selected item,
>> said at least one of a plurality of seller's inter-agents for receiving information regarding said selected item from said buyer's inter-agent and for sending information regarding said selected item to said buyer's inter-agent, each of said plurality of sellers' agents representing a seller of said selected item, and

wherein, when said list of sellers is received by said buyer's inter-agent, said buyer's inter-agent and said seller's inter-agents representing said at least two sellers engage in an exchange of information regarding said selected item.

Peckover generally describes a communication system between a single buyer and a single seller in which the buyer uses a "personal agent". Peckover does not teach the invention of claim 1. For example, Peckover does not teach the claimed step of a buyer seeking information about an item, or a group of items, simultaneously from a group of multiple sellers, that is preliminary to a multilateral and multivariate interactive negotiation between the buyer's intelligent agent and the intelligent agents of the multiple sellers. Further, while Peckover provides passive information about a product form a single seller, he does not provide a system for an active interaction between the buyer and single seller.

Accordingly, because Peckover does not teach the claimed step of using multiple sellers to provide information about an item and does not provide an active process of information exchange with multiple sellers, claim 1 is patentable over Peckover.

Dependent claims 2-29 are also patentable over Peckover, because each claim depends from patentable claim 1, and in addition recites its own patentable features. Independent claims 30, 31, 33, 35, 48, 49, and 52; and their dependent claims 32, 34, 36-47, 50-51 and 53 are also patentable over Peckover for reasons analogous to claim 1.

Favorable action is solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone, mail or electronic mail in order to advance prosecution. Applicants acknowledge that a copy of any electronic mail communications will be made of record in the application file per MPEP § 502.03.

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Respectfully submitted,

NEAL E. SOLOMON

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